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ELLEN'S STRUGGLE FOR CONJUGAL SUPERIORITY ENCOURAGED BY HER AUNT AND COUSIN.

## A WIFE'S STORY.

CHAPTER XIII.—A STRUGGLE FOR VICTORY.

My journey to London was not a pleasant one. I could not feel comfortable. The weather was fine, and the scenery was fine; the change was agreeable, and the motion was exhilarating; but I was far from being satisfied with myself. I had never before committed myself so openly to an opposition to my husband's wishes; at any rate, I had never carried my opposition so far; and there was

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something in his looks, when I parted with him, which said too plainly that I had taken a false step.

"After all," I thought within myself, as we drove rapidly along, "why could I not have waited a few weeks, or a month or two? There is no such pressing, urgent reason why I should be going to London just now. I wish I had thought more about it." You may think it weak, reader; but let me confess that more than once, during the first stage, I was on the very point of calling out to the post-boy to turn his horses' heads and take the way back again to Temple Court. And when the horses were changed at the end of that stage, I even opened my lips with this very purpose; but pride and self-will gained the victory and closed them again.

I remembered, unhappily, one expression in my cousin Clara's last letter, which confirmed me in my resolution to go on, and carry out my opposition. It was this: "You may rely on it, Ellen—a wife must be either a tyrant or a slave;" (I found out afterwards that Clara had borrowed this very foolish and untrue axiom from a book she had been reading); and I think the jingle of it struck me. "I don't want to be a tyrant," I argued, when the chaise was once more in motion; "but, much as I love Harry, I don't choose to be the slave of his unreasonable perverseness. And it is perverseness in him, and nothing less, to have set himself so stubbornly to oppose my wishes."

Perhaps my old Susan's presence also had something to do with the continuance of the journey. Possibly I had made too much of her; she had been my companion from childhood; she was ten years older than myself; she was affectionate, and attached to me: I may say all this in extenuation of my fault. But she was not very well fitted to be my prime minister; and this, in fact, she had by degrees become. She knew that there had been some dispute between Henry and myself about this very journey, and that I had so far conquered by my obstinacy as to have set out upon it at last against his wish. I believed that in her heart she sympathised with me in this—well, let me call it by its right name—this *rebellion*; and I would not humble myself in her sight by appearing to repent. It would be owning myself vanquished if I should return, and I would not be guilty of such weakness; for, after all, was it not unreasonable and unkind—so I ventured to put it to myself—in my husband to have attempted to thwart me?

Besides, Susan was in high spirits about this visit to London: she liked London, and wanted a change; and it would be cruel to disappoint her. So we went on and on, and after a long day's journey, reached — Square.

There I soon recovered my spirits—or my spirit. My aunt Seymour was pleased to see me, and made light of my having left Temple Court without my husband. She dared say he was, or fancied himself, too busy to leave home: those gentlemen are apt to think so much of their own private affairs and arrangements, she said. I did not tell her, in so many words, that I had left home in opposition to Henry's wishes—to his earnest request; but I believe she guessed how matters had been, and she made so light of it herself that I began to make light of it too.

Then she had so much to tell me about herself and her family affairs, and her London friends and visitors; so much, too, about "poor Clara, and that odious Mr. Colvin," and so many plans to discuss, that before she had done my head was in a whirl of excitement such as I had never known at Temple Court.

There was my uncle, too, who wanted to talk about Fair Holt: but this we put off to another time; and there was Clara to go and see the next day.

Poor Clara! she was very wretched, though at first she strove to hide it. I wonder now, that it did not then occur to me how much I had to be thankful for, in my husband and my home. But it did not; or, if the thought crossed my mind, it was stifled by Clara's repinings, and by her almost fierce invectives against conjugal infidelity and tyranny in general; for, with the tenacity of a woman, she would not admit, and perhaps the thought had never sought admittance into her mind, that her own husband was an unfavourable and unworthy specimen of other married men. "They are all alike," said she impatiently; "only some show it more than others, and some wives have more spirit than others, and a better way of managing; but, one and all, they are the most self-willed and tiresome beings in creation. You know it, as well as I do, Ellen," she added; "only you don't say so much about it as I do."

And really, Clara talked so earnestly, and was evidently so fully persuaded of the truth of her remark, that, for the time, I almost believed there was some truth in it.

Two days, three, many days passed away, and I was once more in the whirl of gay London. My uncle kept on his former course, I found, going to business in the morning, and returning to a late dinner—sometimes cheerful and even facetious, but perhaps oftener gloomy and taciturn. My aunt kept on in her former way also; visiting and receiving visitors, going out to evening parties, or holding them at home. Of Clara I did not see much. I was to visit her when I had done with — Square; and that time was not yet fixed.

My uncle and aunt kept on in the same half-and-half course, too, as regarded religion and the world. They had their favourite place of worship and their favourite minister; and they kept up a connection with what they called the *élite* of the religious society with which they were connected; and they drew the line somewhere, though I could never exactly understand where, between what they termed lawful and unlawful amusements. It must have been rather an indefinite line, after all; for their lawful amusements embraced balls, and cards, and theatres. They never went to the race-course, however, and when my aunt's parties were of a particularly sober cast, especially if a popular minister were present, the evening was "wound up and finished off"—as my uncle expressed it—with prayers.

Whether this compromise was acceptable, or whether this equivocal dallying with mere worldly pleasures on the one hand, and a profession of religion on the other, was really productive of satisfaction to my relatives, let those decide who act as they acted. Let me only say, that it is with deep regret and bitter sorrow that I look back on my

own participation in such an incongruous course of life; and that I can but apply to myself the question of an apostle, who asked, "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" But I will not weary you, reader, with reflections.

I had written to Henry to inform him of my safe arrival; but several days passed before I received a reply: and then it was short and hurried—written, as I thought, too, in an ungracious mood. He hoped I should enjoy my visit, but—(this was in reply to a question I had put to him)—he had not the least intention of altering his mind; he was quite decided not to follow me to town.

I stayed a full month at — Square, and in all that time very little communication passed between Henry and myself. I had little to tell him which would interest him to know, I thought; for my time was fully taken up with the engagements to which my aunt Seymour had referred, and these were not sufficiently to Henry's taste to encourage me to write about them. Besides, I was offended with him, and absence did not altogether appease me. Rather, let me say, my resentment was kept alive by his short and business-like notes—so different from his former letters, when we had been sundered; and also by my aunt, who did not hesitate to advise me to keep up my dignity, and show my independence towards my husband.

I had no idea of staying so long in London when I left Temple Court, but the time slipped away almost unperceived by me. At the end of a full month I had not paid my promised visit to Clara; nevertheless, if at that time, or before then, Henry had but written, "I sadly miss you, and want you at home, dear Ellen," I believe I should have returned with a glad heart: but he did not. He expressed no wish, nor even asked how long my visit was to last. This chagrined me.

I stayed a month with Clara. Poor Clara! she was glad of my society, for it procured her an imperfect respite from the unkind treatment of her husband. Their house was a scene of unquiet, however, at best. Much visiting, much bustle, much dissipation; no domestic enjoyment. And now—I did not on my first arrival in London—I began feebly to contrast my cousin's condition with my own, and to feel an awakening attraction to Temple Court.

But by this time, also, I had become increasingly vexed and hurt at my husband's apparent carelessness about my return, and by his inflexibility. It had become to me now a trial of strength, and pride, and affection, whether or not he would yield to my wishes, and meet me in London; and his not very frequent letters were sufficiently explicit on this point. He had quite made up his mind not to leave Temple Court. He did, indeed, give as one reason that his mother continued in an ill state of health; but as he said nothing more explicit respecting her, I was persuaded by my relatives to think that this was a mere excuse, and that he was only carrying out a point against me.

"Henry will soon be tired of sulking," said my aunt to me one day, when I felt unusually worried by his silence, and complained of it. "You will see, if you hold out a little longer, how glad he will be to come round."

And Clara laughingly said something about "a tame wife;" I do not remember exactly what, but it was to the effect that if I did not conquer now, I might expect to be "a tame wife" for ever afterwards. I loved Harry too well to expose him to the degradation of having "a tame wife." I said this to myself, and it may be that I thought it also.

### LIFE AMONG THE VAGABONDS.

INDEPENDENT of the gipsy race, of whom we are not going to treat in the present paper, there are in this country a numerous class, or rather a variety of classes, who, preferring the charms of a wandering life to any other, and entertaining a rooted antipathy to such institutions as rates and taxes, and to the responsibilities of quarter-day, spend the greater part of their lives in the open air, and must be ranked under the denomination of vagabonds.

Perhaps the most pretentious of the migratory English classes are those artisans and handicraftsmen who, under the denomination of "tramps," pass their lives in traversing the kingdom in every direction, in search, professedly at least, of employment. It is rarely that a good hand at his craft is found among them; because, however expert a man may have been at his trade, the want of practice which a tramp must unavoidably experience tends to incapacitate him, and will incapacitate him sooner or later: further, the habit of vagabondage grows upon him; he soon learns to loath the work he seeks, and is often known to avoid applying to a shop where it is to be obtained, lest it should be offered him. The by-laws of most working trades recognise the claim of the tramp to a small sum to help him on his way; and in the case of a confirmed trumper, it is this donation he seeks, and not the employment which would confine him to one spot. It behoves the men of the workshops to be cautious in the admission of all such claims, lest, by aiding the idle and worthless, they injure the unfortunate and deserving.

Another class of migrating industrials are those who, working for themselves, carry their own workshops with them. These, though of a lower grade, are really more independent than the tramping artisan, though it is to be feared that little can be said in praise of their honesty and morality of conduct. Of this class are the tinkers, the knife-grinders, the cane-chair plaiters, the umbrella-menders, the rat-catchers, vermin-hunters, and a rather various tribe of unlicensed hawkers, who, carrying on their commerce on the ostensible principle of barter, manage to distribute among them vast quantities of doubtful goods without adding a doit to her Majesty's exchequer.

But by far the most remarkable and characteristic classes of English nomads are the recreative vagabonds, or those who have taken upon themselves the office of supplying the market-towns, the villages, and the rural districts of the country with amusement. The name of this fraternity is legion, and it is most probable that no reliable estimate of their real numbers has ever been made. They comprise among them strolling players,

keepers of menageries, exhibitors of monsters real or fabulous and fictitious, panoramic showmen, athletes, acrobats, conjurors, and fifty other professionals of various descriptions—all of whom are candidates no less for the reputation to be won by public applause, than for contributions from the public purse. The time has been, when men pursuing this mode of life have accumulated large fortunes, and retired, ere the infirmities of age came upon them, to enjoy the fruits of their labours. That time has long passed away, it is to be hoped for ever, and the empire of this once dominant folly is now undergoing its decline and fall: but it is true, even now, that the rough platforms and canvas booths of these vagabond exhibitors are the training-school of the celebrated city professors, the wizards, magicians, and wonder-workers, as well as the mimes and vocalists, ventriloquists, etc., who from time to time burst into notoriety in the columns of newspapers and in the placards of ten thousand hoardings in the metropolis and great cities of the kingdom.

Any one who would learn what this class consists of, and be able to form an idea of the lives they lead, had need to see them not only in the phases they exhibit to the public, but in the circumstances that surround them when the public is out of sight and far away. We had a curious revelation of this kind afforded us not long ago, in one of the midland counties. On a warm, melting day in August, while wandering in search of the picturesque, we entered a grassy ravine down which a gossiping, saucy brook babbled and sparkled, and swirled along, half in sun and half in shade. The noise of the dashing waters deadened all other sounds, and it was not till we were almost in the centre of the odd scene we are about to describe, that we were aware of having intruded upon a convocation which was probably intended to be secret. At a point near the opening of the ravine, where the ground sloped off upon a tract of waste moss land, the brook expanded into a wide shallow pool, some fifty yards in diameter. Upon the margin of this pool had encamped a mixed colony of young and old, men, women, and children, numbering not less, perhaps, than forty persons in all. Around them closed a rising ground, shutting them out of view from the high-road, which ran past at a quarter of a mile's distance. A few canvas-covered carts, a load of dirty planks on a kind of timber-wain, a couple of worn-out, old-world vans, or rather wooden houses, furnished with door, windows, and chimney, a monster puppet-show, and a couple of the well-known Punch-and-Judy rostrums, had all been pitched down at random on the ground by their several owners—the several gangs having squatted their families and their properties on the most convenient site. A cohort of half-starved donkeys were cropping the succulent grass at the water's edge, and here and there a lean spavined horse burrowed with his nose beneath the moss, in search of more satisfactory diet. On the top of the dirty planks before mentioned, a row of small dogs, mostly of the poodle breed, with their hinder quarters shorn to the skin, sat making most melancholy faces; some of them, who had undergone the ceremony of ablation, were shivering with cold, and the others, anticipating their turn, shivered from

sympathy. At the foot of the wagon, and seated on the shaft, an old woman, smoking a short pipe the while, was washing in an iron pot the little parti-coloured jackets which formed the dramatic costume of the canine performers; and a young girl at her side was plying needle and thread on behalf of the dogs, in repairing their suits. As for the remainder of the company, they exhibited a spectacle which has no parallel, we verily believe, in the whole experience of civilization. They had come there, one and all, to get through the indispensable ceremonies of washing-day, and they were doing business at that particular crisis, with an energy and enthusiasm quite amusing to witness. The pool itself was their general wash-tub, in which both men and women were standing up to their knees, and rapidly going through those familiar evolutions necessary to the purification of linen. Every rag of clothing that the whole party could cast off, consistently with decency, had been consigned to the wash, and all were undergoing the cleansing process, some with soap, which seemed to be a rather scarce article, and some with a saponaceous kind of clay, probably well known to persons who lead a vagabond life. Where the waters of the pool overflowed a pebbly rampart, and began their career down the ravine, a number of cotton printed gowns, too worn and weak to stand the rough handling of the washers, had been pegged fast to the bank under the water, to derive what benefit they might by a swill; some vestiges of shirts and spotted neck-ties bore them company; and a bare-legged boy of twelve, who had this valuable collection in charge, stood knee-deep in the water to intercept any that might part from their moorings. The drying was managed by the several parties ashore, who spread the articles on furze-bushes, laid them along on the mossy ground, or hung them on lines suspended between the carts and vans, and left them to the influence of sun and wind. The most prominent of the washers was a long, saw-toothed, intellectual-looking subject, with a black beard reaching down to his breast, and who presented a most inharmonious spectacle as he soaped, and rubbed, and smoothed on his long lean arm what seemed the pattern-worked lawn of a lady's collar. The gravity of his aspect, which one could never imagine to wear a smile, contrasted with the frivolity of his occupation, was ridiculously incongruous; but no one seemed sensible of that, and the business in which all were engaged went on with an orderly rapidity that promised a speedy consummation.

Simultaneously with the washing, a variety of other operations no less indispensable were going forward. We have already mentioned the girl with the needle. She was but one of a number similarly employed; and together with such feminine labours, others of a rougher nature were performed by the males. A fiddler was rehairing his bow from the tail of a white horse; the guardian of a big drum, which appeared lately to have been in the wars, was cobbling the leather braces, and peering ruefully now and then through a yawning fracture in the tympan, as if hopeless of its cure. Axe and saw, hammer and nails, were at work on the crazy vehicles, and a committee of drivers held a council over a set of dilapidated harness; the peep-show, completely disembowelled,



disclosed its mysteries to unheeding eyes, while the owner, pottering among the strings and pulleys, sought to repair the dislocated machinery. All the while, a hideous booing and braying arose from a distant part of the ground, where a tall swart fellow, in a Tyrolese hat, had gutted a monster fabric on wheels, partaking partly of the nature of an organ and partly resembling an automaton theatre. He was tuning the musical part of this double machine; and anything more dismal and lugubrious than the wail of the single notes, as they waned and wavered into unison, it is not easy to conceive.

We needed no key to the above singular scene. We saw at a glance that all these preparations were but the necessary preliminaries to a country pleasure fair, which was to come off on the morrow at a small town situated a few miles distant, and which was our temporary home at the time. Some questions to the landlord of a wayside inn, where we found a dinner, elicited other particulars regarding the queer assembly. Most of them, he said, came this round regularly twice a year, and in summer they generally had a washing day at the brook. They were all of them customers of his, and were regular paymasters, from the simple fact that he never gave them credit. He could sleep a hundred of them in the barn, and charged them nothing for lodging; but if they did not pay their score, he detained their properties; he had then one of the performing poodles left in pledge for three and sixpence; but the owner would send the first money he took on the morrow, and most likely the debt would be discharged in coppers and the dog redeemed before twelve o'clock. The poor hostage was tied up in the bar, and we could hear his plaintive whine at intervals. The landlord did not consider the strollers to be worse as to morals than the run of his customers; some of them were hard drinkers, to be sure, but that was the exception and not the rule; in the mass, they liked a good hot supper better than anything else, and generally turned in afterwards. Times were not what they had been with them, and he "reckoned it was a hard pinch to make a do of it."

We entertained the same opinion on the following day, when the experiment had to be tried. Most of the strollers had arrived in the marketplace the night before, and selected their ground; and the whole town was aroused from sleep at dawn by the hammering, lumbering, and din of the preparations going forward. Those who came first monopolized the best sites, and those who had erected their stages in the night, as some of them did, had the entire day for business. There is no great advantage in this, however, as the business of a country fair rarely commences till noon has passed; nor is it before the evening that multitudes crowd to the spot, and the fun, the frolic, the folly, and the sin are at their height.

We are not going to catalogue the details of a country fair. Already, many that were once familiar things have vanished from the scene, and are only matters of history; and the existence of others is doomed, and they too will disappear. There are, however, considerations in connection with such a spectacle, which it is not wisdom to ignore; and if there be abuses to be deplored, it

is not by ignoring them that they will be reformed. The country fair has had its uses; and though the extension of railways and the means of communication may be thought to have done away with the need of them, they may possibly, in certain districts, be still a necessity to the lower classes. In small towns and villages it will happen, perhaps, that it is only at the periodical fair that the cottager can procure either the implements of his industry, the furniture of his cottage, or the clothing worn by himself and family. The English labourer, as he has done for centuries, will in such cases retain his little hoard for disbursement at fair time, with the intention of supplying himself then with a few indispensable necessities. He goes to the fair for that purpose. But what does he meet with there? Instead of the honest tradesman, he finds Cheap Jack, who bawls and lies him out of his hard earnings, and foists upon him the vilest trash in lieu of genuine goods. Seduced by the vociferous protestations and the broad humour of this knave, he buys articles at fifty per cent. above their value, and deludes himself with the idea of a bargain. Again, the labourer goes to the fair for recreation; the fair-day is the periodical holiday, and upon his holiday he seeks for amusement. But just as the traffic of the fair is left to be monopolized by any knave who dares to lie the loudest, so the amusements are delivered over to the vagabond classes, and vested in them alone. There surely might be a remedy devised for these evils, and the unsophisticated labourer be delivered from fraud and cheating on the one hand, and temptations sensual and obscene on the other.

Walking on business through the fair, we at once recognise some of the splashing tritons of yesterday, though now under a very different aspect. There is the Tyrolese, with his equipage all polished and lacquered, grinding away at his huge machine with a roar that fills the whole town. Around him a crowd of simpletons stand open-mouthed, devouring the inexplicable drama performed by the little wooden figures, which dance and twirl and pirouette, and run and fight and tussle together, all by the mere turning of the handle; while among the gazers the grinder's child, with kerchief crossed on her breast, and head crowned with a tiara, thrusts herself and her little tambourine, and looks an appeal for largess. There are the performing dogs, the liberated captive among them, dressed in colours and spangles, moving in a minuet to the music of the pandean pipes, and that self-same big drum, which yesterday we saw in such forlorn condition. And there, verily, is that saw-toothed, long-bearded philosopher, now clad in the professional, almost courtly, costume of two or three centuries back—in slashed silk hose, pumps with broad plated buckles, a close vest, covered with a waving mantle, all of the deepest black, and wearing a peaked hat with ostrich feather; and beneath his chin, forming a snowy background to his long black beard, a pointed Vandyke collar, which we recognise as the identical gem of needlework which he was yesterday washing with such deliberate gravity. He is a professor of the healing art; and, standing in front of his open van, pill-box in hand, discourses, "in words of learned length and thundering

sound," on the mysterious complications of the human body, and the merits of his medicaments—a discourse which seems to have less charms for his hearers than the comments of the doctor's buffoon, who is sitting on a stool at his feet, and makes all sorts of horrible grimaces of countenance and contortions of body, in exemplification of the sufferings which the doctor's boluses will cure.

And besides all the other spectacles, and worse than any of them, when night comes, there is the travelling theatre, blazing with a hundred torches, on whose broad platform fools and clowns, and mummery and harlequins, and shameless women, dance and shout and reel and whirl in one mad maze together, all affording but a foretaste of the indecency and fooleries within. Worse even than this, there are the dancing and drinking booths, where drunkenness and wantonness go hand in hand, and where, to the sound of merriest music, youth and thoughtlessness frolic on the verge of veriest perdition.

It is greatly to be lamented, we repeat, that these recreations are entirely left in the hands of the unworthy. Surely something could be done by the actively benevolent to turn them to better account. It is satisfactory, at all events, to know that fairs in our large towns, if proved to be a nuisance, can now be put down by law.

Such are some of the aspects of the vagabond tribes, and of their relations with, and influences upon, that portion of society with which they are brought into contact. Our limits have confined us to a mere glance at the subject, which is, moreover, one that cannot be too cautiously approached in addressing the general reader, and could not here be treated at any length or with any closeness of view. We have said nothing of the vagabond criminal class, who make society their prey. That would have to be viewed from a different stand-point, and would be too weighty a matter for a light article.

#### THE GREAT COMET OF 1858.

A FAIR claim has been established for the present year to be regarded as a memorable one in the annals of astronomy, whatever events betide the remainder of its term. In January, on the 22nd, a new member was added to the interesting group of miniature planets circulating between Mars and Jupiter, making the fifty-first, which received the name of Nemausa, from the ancient name of Nîmes, the native place of the discoverer, M. Laurent. About the same time, tidings came to hand from the southern hemisphere, of the re-observation of another periodical comet, first detected by M. D'Arrest, of the Leipsic Observatory, in June, 1851, to which an elliptic orbit was assigned, with a period of somewhat less than  $6\frac{1}{2}$  years. Its next perihelion passage, therefore, fell due towards the close of the year 1857; and the accuracy of the calculation was verified by Mr. Maclear, at the Cape of Good Hope, who, on the 4th of December, observed the comet. In February, the fifty-second of the small planets, Europa, was picked up by the indefatigable M. Goldschmidt, at Paris; and in April the fifty-third, Calypso, was caught by the

equally diligent M. Luther, of Bilk, near Dusseldorf, both amateur astronomers. Summer had scarcely arrived when Dr. Donati, of Florence, on the 2nd of June, had his attention arrested by a small nebulous star, which a few observations proved to be a comet—the identical object which has since revealed such stately proportions and singular splendour. In August, Encke's comet hove in sight to the telescope, on its return to the sun for the twelfth time since the year 1819, when its periodicity of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years was first ascertained. In September, Goldschmidt found another small planet, the fifty-fourth of the family, and the eleventh of his own discovery, to which the name of Alexandra has been assigned. We have since seen, October 2, at the Astronomical Society, a printed notification of a similar discovery by Mr. Searle, at Albany, in the United States, which makes the fifty-fifth planetoid, and the second of these bodies found across the Atlantic, to which no name that has reached us has yet been given. These incidents, singly of great interest, collectively render the year memorable. But Donati's comet will be pre-eminently recognised as the grand astronomical event of 1858.

The brilliant traveller in the heavens, to which millions of wondering eyes have been directed, belongs to a class of objects which have powerfully arrested the attention of mankind in all ages, excited not a little apprehension, and originated the wildest conjectures respecting their physical constitution and office in the universe. It is not surprising, in ignorant and superstitious times, that feelings of mingled astonishment and dread should have been inspired by grand examples, owing to the strange and extraordinary aspects occasionally exhibited, their rapid and apparently erratic movements, their obvious magnitudes, and the suddenness with which they often emerge from the realms of invisibility, swiftly retiring to them again after having been for a brief interval a glory and a mystery in the night-sky of our planet. The alarm caused by such appearances has abated, and only lingers among the unintelligent orders of society. But the interest is greater than ever; for while such exhibitions are as impressive as heretofore to the popular eye, science has special reasons of its own for watching them. Having succeeded in showing that the motions of comets are regulated by the same general laws as those of the planets, and founded upon these premises truthful predictions of their re-appearance, encouragement may be gathered from past success to pursue the task of interrogation. Still, in relation to the intimate nature of these bodies, the particular causes of the remarkable changes they are observed to undergo, and the functions they fulfil in our system, science is altogether dumb, or speaks only to confess its ignorance. In these respects, the fine object, now vanished from our hemisphere, has come and gone without giving us any revelation, though scrutinized by the mightiest telescopes, and remains as much an enigma to the ripe philosopher as to the humble rustic.

Of all bodies in the solar universe, of which we have any knowledge, comets possess the smallest mass, and occupy the largest space. They are also by far the most numerous, with the exception, perhaps, of aerolites, or the meteor-planets, which

are occasionally caught by the earth's attraction, descend to the terrestrial surface, or are dissipated by fusion in the atmosphere. Notices of between seven and eight hundred have been collected by cometary staticians, from ancient and modern records, since the commencement of the Christian era. But this can only be a small instalment of the actual number, since, prior to the invention of the telescope, or through sixteen centuries of the period, only conspicuous examples could be observed. Multitudes also, before and since, must have escaped observation, owing to their paths being confined to that part of the heavens which is above the horizon in the day time. In such circumstances, it is only on the very rare occasion of a coincident total solar eclipse that comets can be visible, or when they have a magnitude and splendour which is wholly exceptional. Hence the entire number must amount at least to several thousands.

Many observers have specially devoted themselves to the look-out for these mysterious bodies. Messier, in the latter part of the last century, discovered fourteen, and became familiarly known as the "comet-ferret," owing to the zeal with which he hunted after them. To high scientific acquirements he united great simplicity of character, which bordered upon childishness as he advanced in years. While obliged to suspend his favourite pursuit, having to attend the death-bed of his wife, Montaigne of Limoges snatched from him the honour of a discovery. Messier was inconsolable. "Alas!" said he, when condoled with on becoming a widower, "I had discovered twelve, and this Montaigne has robbed me of the thirteenth!" Then, recollecting his other loss, he exclaimed, "Ah! cette pauvre femme!" and went on deploring wife and comet together. Méchain, his contemporary, discovered 10; Pons, 29; De Vico, 8; and Miss Caroline Herschel, 6. The names of two other ladies occur in the list of comet-finders: Miss Maria Mitchell, of Nantucket, in the United States, and Madame Mädlar, of Dorpat, who independently detected the comet of 1847, the priority lying with the American astronomer. In 1840, in order to promote the discovery of comets, the late king of Denmark instituted a prize medal to be awarded to the first observer; and no branch of astronomy is now more eagerly pursued than the cometic, or indeed is more deserving of it; for, apart from the singular interest attached to such objects, they aid us in becoming more accurately acquainted with the planetary system. In 1838 and 1848, when the comet of Encke closely approached Mercury, the perturbations it experienced corrected former estimates respecting the disturbing planet's mass.

Comparatively few of the present generation have before witnessed such a magnificent phenomenon as the one recently visible on clear nights in the western heavens. Only those have been thus privileged, who are verging upon three-score years, and can distinctly recall the events of 1811, when the comet of that year was thus apostrophized by the Ettrick Shepherd:—

"Stranger of heaven, I bid thee hail!  
Shred from the pall of glory riven,  
That flashest in celestial gale—  
Broad pennon of the king of heaven!

"Whate'er portends thy front of fire,  
And streaming locks so lovely pale;  
Or peace to man, or judgments dire,  
Stranger of heaven, I bid thee hail!"

This was a very fine object, larger than our late visitor, but not so brilliant, as it never came within hail of the terrestrials by an immensely greater distance. It first appeared in harvest-time, rapidly became conspicuous, and remained visible through the whole of the following winter. Many a reaper late in the field stayed his hand, and many a homeward-bound peasant halted by the way to gaze upon the celestial novelty as it grew into distinctness with the declining day. The season was remarkable for its bountiful harvest and abundant vintage. Grapes, figs, melons, and other fruits were not only produced in extraordinary quantity, but of delicious flavour, so that "comet wines" had distinct bins allotted to them in the cellars of merchants, and were sold at high prices. By a coincidence which has been popularly noticed, we have had the "blazing star" flaring aloft, with a summer and autumn of unusual warmth, a plentiful harvest, and fine vintages are reported from all the wine-growing countries of Europe. But on examining the records of temperature for an entire century, as kept at the public observatories, Arago found the conclusion decisively established, that comets have no appreciable effect upon the terrestrial seasons. The ample crops of 1811 and 1858 must therefore be regarded, in the present state of knowledge, as coincidences merely with an astronomical phenomenon, without the slightest physical connection with it.

A volume might be compiled, of no mean size or slender interest, upon the terrestrial events which mankind in former ages tacked to the apparition of comets, either as effects to a cause, or incidents to an omen, registering the quaintly expressed opinions of chroniclers, and the surmises of the multitude. They had no relation in general to such vulgar affairs as husbandry and temperature, but to high concerns of state, as change of dynasties, wars and rumours of wars, the birth and death of kings, heroes, and other notables. Shakspeare introduces the wife of Cæsar, saying—

"When beggars die there are no comets seen;  
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes;"  
—and the Duke of Bedford is made to exclaim, in lamentation for the death of Henry V—

"Comets, importing change of times and states,  
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,  
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars."

"Experience," quoth old John Gadbury, "is an eminent evidence that a comet, like a sword, portendeth war; and an hairy comet, or a comet with a beard, denoteth the death of kings." He then adds, somewhat profanely, "As if God and nature intended by comets to ring the knells of princes, esteeming the bells of churches upon earth not sacred enough for such illustrious and eminent performances." What an instance of mental and moral blindness! A monk thus curiously expounded the divine right of the Norman Conqueror to invade England, relating "how a star with three long tails appeared in the sky; how the learned declared that such stars appeared only when a kingdom wanted a new master; and how

the said star was called a *comette*." In 1264, all Europe connected the death of Pope Urban IV with the "prodigy of a hairy star." Its first appearance, we are told, "boded his illness;" and when the pope was dying, like a sensible comet it disappeared, "as though it had been aware of his death." Great stress was laid upon the fact, that the pontiff expired and the comet departed on the same night. In 1515, according to current ideas, a comet predicted the decease of Ferdinand the Catholic; another, in 1532, performed the same office for Sforza II; and one in 1556, oddly enough described as having turned its tail towards Spain, greatly alarmed the emperor Charles V, as a sign of his approaching end. It is said to have induced him to cede the imperial crown to his son Ferdinand, having already renounced that of Spain in favour of his son Philip. He expressed his fears upon the occasion in a Latin line, thus turned into French verse:—

"Par la triste comete,  
Qui brille sur ma tête,  
Je connois que les cieux,  
M'appellent de ces lieux."

"The comet does me much honour," was the remark of Cardinal Mazarine, on his death-bed, when informed by sycophants that one had made its appearance. Messier, before mentioned, was the last real astronomer guilty of the folly of astrologically placing a comet before the world, and thereby ministering to imperial pride. To flatter Napoleon, who confided in his lucky star, he concocted a noted treatise, published in 1808, the "Grand Comète qui a paru à la naissance de Napoléon le Grand." But in 1816, Dr. Pennada actually read to the Institute at Padua a detailed memoir, showing "that the most remarkable political events have always been preceded, accompanied, or followed by extraordinary astro-meteorologic phenomena." According to such a sage, a connection might be established between the fortifications of Cherbourg, or the first telegraphic message across the Atlantic, and the celestial visitant of the present year.

A familiar stanza tell us

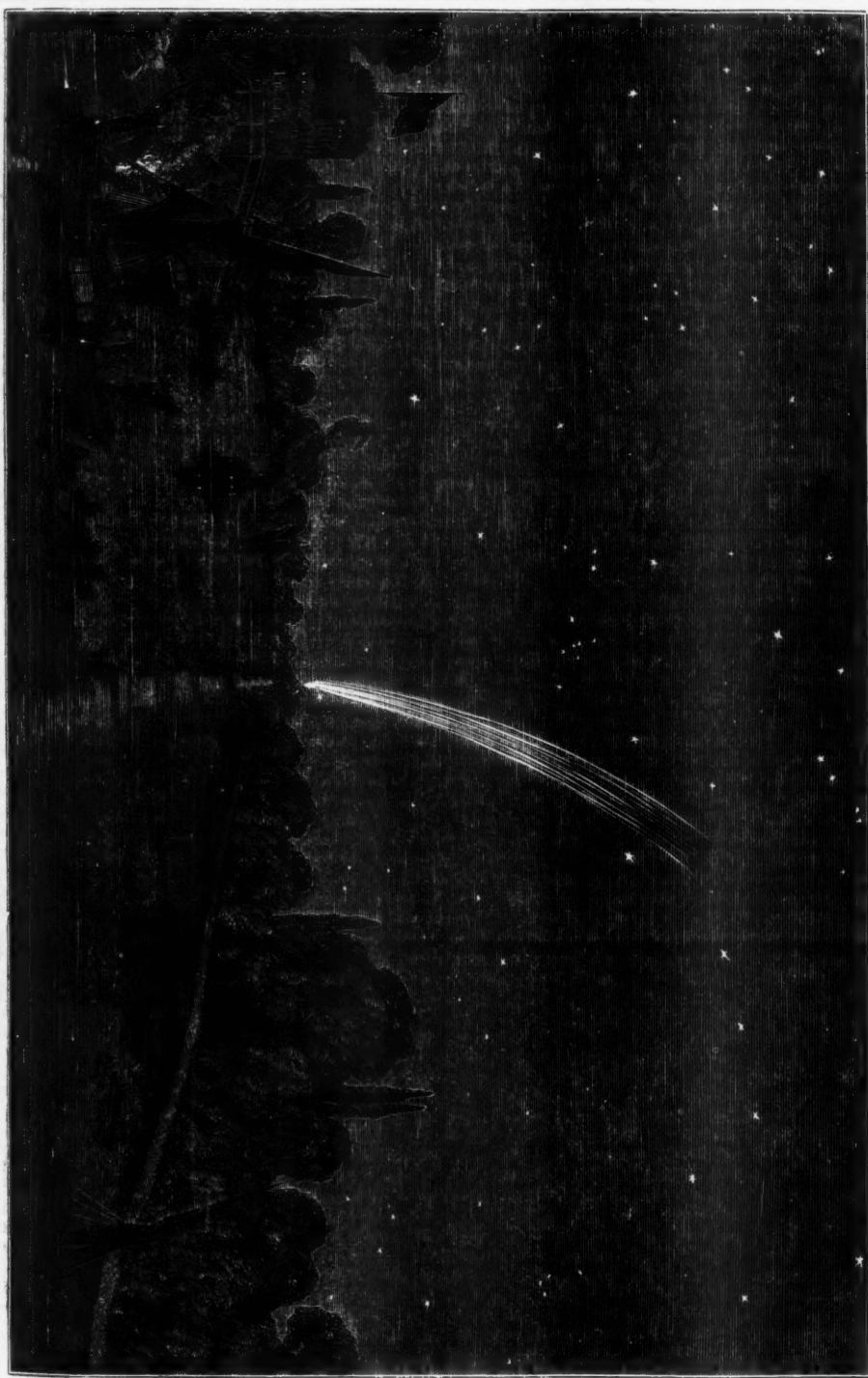
"how hard it is to climb  
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar."

Yet some candidates seem to ascend the hill with remarkable ease, and to even gain the summit by a single leap from the base. It is not so really, for there is always a large amount of pains-taking, unknown to the world, before honourable distinction is gained; yet such is sometimes the appearance. A poet is said to have awoke one morning, and found himself famous. Rapidly, too, has Dr. G. B. Donati, astronomer at the Museum of Florence, achieved notoriety. Little thought he, on the evening of the 2nd of June last, when he first saw what seemed to be an insignificant nebula lurking in the constellation Leo, that it would give a world-wide celebrity to his name, and enroll it permanently on the page of history. There it was, where it had not been seen before, changing too its place; and a few watchings of the faint speck declared it to be a comet. Henceforth it will be known as Donati's, on the ground of discovery, just as the names of Halley and Encke are given to the comets whose periodicity they ascertained.

In August the comet was visible in an ordinary night-glass, and became just perceptible to the naked eye as the month closed. Early in September it was as bright as a star of the third magnitude, and was caught by a man in humble life, whose account of the sight, with the manner in which he took, by means of two sticks, the bearing of the visitor, is a perfect curiosity in its way. It was forwarded to the leading daily paper, obtained a conspicuous position in it, *verbatim et literatim*, and has been copied into one of the scientific journals. The writer, no master of orthography, but a kind of diamond in the rough, gave his name and whereabouts as "C. Moren Shareness Kent Engaland." His letter displayed the most profound ignorance of the commonest rudiments of education, yet evinced no inconsiderable natural sagacity. What with wretched spelling, and the total want of punctuation, it was scarcely intelligible, as a specimen will show:—"Sir—on Munday morning the 6th of Sept. I Seen a Commet Star at 2 10m An I have could two more men to witness my Strange Site in the Heavens this Commet Maid its apierance to me above the Horizen at 10 minuts past 2. The Skej was then very Clear—at 2.30 it is on an Even line with the two Pointers to the North Star and about the Same Distance Below the Pointers as the North Star is from the Pointers. I fixt 2 Sticks in the Ground and fixt a rool By them I took my alivation By those at the same time I had my Spy Glass to watch menutely—Gentlemen Be Pleased to let me Know if I am the first man that Seen this Strange Star out of 16 Milion of People in England—As I Ern my living By being out at Night this 35 years Past I have witnessed often wonderful Strange Sights in the Heavens—that never Come Before the Publick." The writer, it is now known, is one of the coast-guard in the Isle of Sheppey, and therefore, as intimated, much accustomed to nocturnal aspects and phenomena. In recognition of unrefined intelligence, the Astronomer Royal has very appropriately sent him a number of volumes on astronomical subjects. It will be perceived that he simply put on record his own observations, in a most ungrammatical way. But another correspondent of the leading journal, who aspired to propose a theory, recommended it by such orthography as "comit," "atmospher," "brillient," and "redicule;" and by such philology as that "the word 'comit' is derived from comma, a character which it is supposed it bears some resemblance to from its tail!"

Speeding towards the sun with constantly accelerated velocity, the comet rapidly became brighter as September wore away, presenting a nucleus strongly condensed and brilliant, with a conspicuous tail thrown off in the ordinary form, without bifurcation, but very visibly curved in the opposite direction to that of the motion of the nucleus. This curvature is a usual feature, and when strongly marked, it doubtless gave rise to the reported sabre or scimitar-like aspect of comets, often mentioned in old chronicles. On several evenings, before dark, fine meteors of various hue heralded the appearance of the majestic traveller in the sky. Clear nights, on October 2nd and 5th, revealed it with great splendour and enlarged magnitude. The tail extended from 30° to 40° in length,





APPEARANCE OF DONATE'S COMET FROM FUTURE BRIDGE, OCTOBER 17TH, 1898.

which may stand at least for 40,000,000 of miles. Though such an appendage is inseparably connected with comets in the popular mind, yet by far the greater number are really without it. On the other hand, some have been observed with two tails; and one, in 1744, appeared with six, curving in the same direction, and spread out in the form of an immense fan. Long and short-tailed comets constitute further variety. Nothing is more remarkable than the enormous length of these appendages in some instances, and the rapidity with which they appear to be formed. Thus the comet of 1843, only seen by a few fortunate observers in the northern hemisphere, and only revealed in its full proportions in the southern, shot out in less than twenty days a tremendous train of 200,000,000 of miles. This, coiled around the earth like a serpent, would have girdled it eight thousand times at the equator, and have extended to the zone of the asteroids if stretched out from the sun.

An interesting phenomenon was well observed on the evening of October 5th, when the nucleus of the comet made a close approach to Arcturus, mentioned in our version of the book of Job as the equivalent of the Hebrew *Aish*: "Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" This star, a first-class one, in the constellation of Bootes, was formerly considered, but without authority, the nearest of the stellar host to our system, chiefly owing to its brilliance and proper motions. But the determination of its parallax by M. Peters, places it at the astounding distance of 1,620,000 times the distance of the sun, equal to 153 billions of miles. It is remarkable as being the body by which the fine discovery was made, that stars and planets may be advantageously observed during the sun's presence; and now we know further, that Arcturus defies the interception of a comet's tail to obscure its brightness. While a few feet of terrestrial fog would have utterly extinguished the orb for the time, it was enveloped in the appendage near the nucleus, not only without any reduction of brilliance, but with a marked increase, and with bright prismatic hues. The scene was striking and beautiful in the extreme. Many were the gatherings upon the house-tops in the metropolis to enjoy it, while cabbies drove slowly over the bridges, and passengers halted in the streets, with the same object in view. The old stager on Waterloo Bridge, with his telescope at a penny a peep, had no lack of customers, to whom he occasionally doled out a bit of astronomy; but, with an eye to trade, the admonition to be quick was much more frequent, seeing that the comet was to set at nine o'clock, when the pence would cease to circulate.

Never before had Arcturus such a host of admirers, for it so happens that he was in very bad odour with mankind in ancient times. They did not like his looks, and regarded the innocent orb as ungenial to husbandry, while particularly uncivil to mariners. Hence Virgil advises the husbandmen to be cautious in turning up the soil when "cold Arcturus" rises heliacally, that is, with the early morn, and Horace speaks of the "violent influence of setting Arcturus;" so that it mattered not, rising or setting, mortals were determined to find fault with the star. A brief interval of squally

weather, which marked the change from summer to autumn, the Greeks unhesitatingly ascribed to its influence, simply because the rise of the star soon after sunset coincided with it. From a speech of Demosthenes, we learn that a sum of money was lent at Athens on bottomry, on a vessel going to the Crimea and back, at  $22\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; but unless the vessel returned before the time when Arcturus thus rose, letting loose the squalls, and increasing the hazard of shipwreck, 30 per cent. was to be paid. One cannot but imagine that the ancients would have been panic-struck, had the spectacle we have witnessed with admiration been exhibited to them. Surely some terrible combination,

"Threatening the world with famine, plague, and war,"

would have been surmised from two such dangerous characters as a vagabond comet and the tempestuous orb laying their heads together. So much for the "observed of all observers" on a late occasion. We will only add to this gossip, now that the popular eye has no bright wanderer to guide it to Arcturus, that the old rhymester's direction may suffice—

"Lead on a line from two bright stars  
In Ursa's tail the last,  
The same prolong'd thrice ten degrees,  
Will on that gem be cast."

Towards midnight, October 10th, the comet made its closest approach to the earth, when it was upwards of 50,000,000 of miles from us. It has been a much nearer neighbour to Venus, and been seen to greater advantage by its inhabitants, if there are such. Though now lost to view in Europe, it is under inspection in the southern hemisphere, and will be visible there through the opening months of the coming year. An elliptical orbit, with a period of revolution of 2,495 years, has been assigned to the fine celestial visitant.

The remark is as old as the days of Seneca, that the stars are visible through the substance of comets; and the fact has been repeatedly exemplified in modern times, with reference even to those of the most inferior order of brightness. Thus the one discovered by Miss Mitchell, in 1847, was observed to pass centrally over a star of the fifth magnitude, the light of which was in no degree enfeebled by the interception, though the most trifling terrestrial mist would have effaced it altogether. Sir John Herschel therefore states, that the most unsubstantial clouds which float in the highest regions of our atmosphere, must be regarded as dense and massive bodies compared with the filmy and all but spiritual texture of a comet. The appearance of the nucleus has indeed often raised the suspicion of an opaque body; but the application of high magnifying power has seldom failed distinctly to dispel the idea, while minute stars have been seen through the very centre of it. There is, hence, the strongest reason to conclude that the material of comets is entirely vaporous or æriform, rendered visible by the solar illumination; and it must be of inconceivable tenuity; for they pass to and fro in the system, occupying enormous spaces without exerting any perturbative power, not affecting in the least the motions of planets or satellites, though liable to great disturbances from them. Out of the entire number of comets noticed, the orbits of about two

hundred have been computed. Of these, forty are known with more or less certainty to describe ellipses, or ovals, differing extremely from the elliptical paths of the planets by their great elongation. The elliptic comets must have visited the sun before, and will return to it again, unless disturbed; and seven of them have obediently come back—Halley's, Encke's, Biela's, Faye's, De Vico's, Brorsen's, and D'Arrest's. The remainder appear to have described parabolas, or open curves, which never return into themselves. Consequently the comets return no more, but run off into the immensity of space. It is, however, not improbable, that the parabolic orbits are only so in appearance, being ellipses so immensely elongated as to be undistinguishable as such, owing to human infirmity failing to follow their course.

Whatever be the constitution of comets, they must be regarded as necessary components of the great scheme of nature, essential to its completeness, having a determinate office, which we have not found out, and perhaps never shall do. But we have done with old dreams respecting mazy monsters in the sky, and mysterious messengers sent to announce the death of princes, and the vacancy of thrones. We fear, too, no collision with such bodies, since they, as we, are obedient to the laws of gravitation; and dread no danger, should collision actually occur, since there is more reason to infer good from the interview than evil. The remarkable changes that comets are observed to undergo, imply the existence of such forces as those of electricity and magnetism in great force and action; and it may be their office, as Sir Isaac Newton conjectured, to replenish the atmospheres of both the sun and planets with these and other useful elements. We know not that it is so; we know nothing to the contrary; but have strong reason to regard them as beneficent rather than injurious visitors, because "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

## THE SCHOOLMASTER AND HIS SON:

A MEMOIR OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

CHAPTER XVI.—VALENTINE'S LETTER, CONCLUDED.

"And now my heart be still, be still,  
Submit to all that is God's will."

"WHEN I had walked for about an hour through a wood, I found myself greatly fatigued; my breath came short and quick, and the sun, although it was early spring, was so bright and oppressive, that I lay down to rest in the shade of a large beech tree. I drew out the little packet of money that Olufson had given me, to reckon whether I should have enough to pay my expenses at the slow rate of travelling I felt would be necessary for me, and I then found that my true friend had made the buying my horse a pretence for giving me a large sum. He had counted out gold instead of silver, and thus, in a small packet, had given me far more than I could possibly want.

"Touched by his delicacy, I drew forth from my bosom the little Bible he had put into my hand at parting, and held it in my hand merely to look at as his gift; but after doing so for a few moments, I opened it, and my eye fell on the thirteenth verse of the seventh chapter of

Joshua. The words seemed specially written for me. 'Surely,' I thought, 'there must be some accursed thing in me that keeps me back from the success that I have been seeking these five years past. I have been a brave soldier, and never drawn back from duty. I have ventured life and limb to win distinction. I have had fame and fortune in my hands, but it has always fallen from my grasp.' And then I thought of Olufson. 'How different was his lot! yet what had he done more than I had? Was he equal to me when he joined our regiment at Nuremberg? He, a poor peasant lad, I the son of a schoolmaster. He had not fought more bravely, he had not sought renown as I had; yet now he was going forward fresh and joyful, while I was crawling home, after toil and danger, sick and feeble, a beggar and a runaway, to seek a quiet bed to die on. Why had a blessing followed all he attempted, while a curse seemed to attend all I did?'

"My eyes, on reflection, were opened to perceive the difference in our proceedings from the outset. He had inherited the blessing of his parents. 'Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother,' was a command of God that I had disobeyed. No blessing rested on my course; so said my awakened conscience. And now a crowd of recollections, hitherto stifled, awoke in my mind. I thought of you, beloved parents, as you were seven years ago, and thought also of the change that sorrow for your first-born must have wrought in you, dear father, and in you, dearest mother; your face wrinkled, your hair bleached, and your figure bent by the burthen of woe laid upon you by your unworthy son. I thought of you as sitting in your little room at Sommerhausen, sad and silent, or telling my brothers and sisters that few and evil had been the days of your life, embittered by my conduct. My soldier life seemed a dream to me, as if I had now awakened from a state of intoxication of seven years' duration; and I felt again the anguish in which I had rushed out of the council chamber. I stood again, with my bundle in my hand, trembling as I told Johan that I was determined to flee away from home for ever. 'Woe! woe! woe!' I cried out; 'I have not obeyed my father, I have neglected the commands of my mother, therefore a curse rests upon me, and my light shall be extinguished in darkness. Gracious God! have mercy upon me. Spare me until I can see my parents face to face, and ask their pardon for all the anguish I have caused them, until I can throw myself at their feet, listen to their reproaches, and entreat their forgiveness with tears and prayers.'

"I rose up and continued my journey. Day after day I went slowly on, as long as my difficult breathing permitted and my weak limbs would bear me. My weakness increased every mile; but it seemed to increase my anxiety to get on, and I permitted myself neither rest nor quiet until, at the end of a fortnight, I again saw the river Main. Now I began to hope my prayers to see you would be granted, and I thought I should soon see you; but the Lord wills otherwise. Here I lie since that day, and I employ every moment I can write in giving you this history of my wretched life; for ah! I cannot hope to see you.

"As I came to a little village on the way, called

Bestenhaid, my chest became so painful that I could scarcely breathe. At last I fell on the road, as it was getting dark in the evening, and a stream of blood flowed from my mouth, as before at leaving Breisach. How long I lay there I cannot tell; but at last a countryman, passing with his cart, heard me groan, and offered to take me on if I could get into the wagon. With his assistance I managed to do so, after which my senses failed, and when I next opened my eyes, I was in bed in a large empty room. I could not rise nor call. After a while a little girl of about ten years old entered, and when she saw that my eyes were open, she came over to me and wished me good morning.

"Where am I?" I asked.

"At Wertheim, in the poor-house," answered the child; "a countryman brought you here last night. The pestilence has been very bad in this town, and all in this house died except me, and so I do what I can to help the sick."

"Who are you, my dear child?" I asked.

"An orphan; my father was one of the labourers at the Count's castle. One day the soldiers came, burned our cottage, and killed my father; my mother died of the pestilence, and then they sent me here."

"Ah!" I said, "you too can tell something of the misery that war brings into families."

"No," replied the child, "my mother taught me nothing of that. She taught me prayers and hymns, and told me to pray every day. Shall I pray for you now?"

"Yes," I answered, and the little girl folded her hands, and began to pray in words that her mother had taught her, and that had no special reference to me; yet they touched my feelings, and my "Amen" came truly from my heart. She at once began a hymn at the end of her prayer. It was one I had often heard you, dear mother, sing, and my tears flowed freely as I listened:—

"God's will in heaven, on earth be done,  
That will is good, and that alone,  
Where saints and angels dwell above,  
They see and know that all is love;  
And those below who seek his rest,  
Find all things ordered for the best.

"When from life's path we go astray,  
To wander in sin's hopeless way,  
His will it is that sends the rod  
And calls us still to seek our God;  
While conscience, that was lulled to rest,  
Wakens within the sinner's breast."

"I need not remind you how often you have sung that hymn to me when I was quite a boy, nor need I now write the whole.

"When she had finished her hymn, I asked whether she knew of any minister of the gospel, who would be kind enough to visit a poor sinner who sincerely wished to find the path to God, and to make the Lord his confidence and his strength.

"Certainly," replied the little girl; "our dear old pastor has been here to-day already; but you were asleep, and he would not permit me to disturb you. He said he would come again in the evening."

"He did as he said. That is now ten weeks ago, and the good man has visited me every day since. He has been to me the messenger of

peace. I told him every particular of my course of sin and sorrow, of my leaving home and parents, and of my present wish to return to them, to humble myself before you and to ask your forgiveness, but that I had very little hope of ever being able to leave the couch on which I lay. I told him that the child's song had awakened a hope within me that I might yet find forgiveness.

"He looked at me earnestly, and then said, with a smile: 'There is hope for all; nay, more than hope, certainty, for all who come to Christ. But though all you say is true and right, you do not seem to be aware of the depth of your sinfulness. True, you have sinned against your earthly parents, but still more have you sinned against your heavenly Father. When David sinned, he said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." You have not reflected on your sin against God. I hope he may grant you time and strength to reach your parents; but I have even better hope for you—hope that your Father in heaven forgives you for the sake of Christ, for it is his Spirit that has called you to repentance this day, and even at the eleventh hour offers you salvation. Ask yourself whether it has not been neglect of his word and will that has led you to cause so much sorrow to your parents, by treading the paths of sin. The Lord wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. He now offers you salvation; do not neglect or refuse it. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.'

"Such is the substance of what this excellent man said to me, and his words found entrance to my heart. The chastisements of God had been for my good, and sorrow and tears had watered the seed of God's word, that you, beloved parents, had planted in my heart in childhood. I had been blind, now my eyes were opened; I had been walking in the broad road to destruction, but the Lord had interposed between me and the last step, and said to me, as to the thief on the cross, "To-day thou shalt be with me." Oh, my dear father and mother, my soul has indeed been full of sorrow; and I have often wet my couch with my tears, but the word of God my Saviour has reached me, saying, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by name; thou art mine;" and listening to this I have found peace. Oh! how I wish I could see you, and hear from your lips the words of forgiveness; but every day my hope is feebler. God denies me that happiness, and I submit; he knows best. He has given me the great blessing; I must not repine if he refuse the lesser. So, farewell, beloved parents. God reward you for sowing the seed of his word in my soul. At last it has brought forth fruit; it did not thrive in sunshine, but storm has made it grow.

"I have been ten days writing this letter, and it is blotted by tears. My hand trembles, and I can now scarcely hold my pen; but yet sometimes, like a candle burning out in a socket, my strength seems suddenly to rise afresh. Ask the commissary to forgive me; he will not refuse pardon to a dying man. Another request I have to make, namely, that the minister will, the Sunday after you receive this letter, announce from the pulpit,



as it is usual to do in our congregation, the death of Valentine Gast; and tell him that, as I have found grace, he need not fear to add that 'he died in the hope of a joyful resurrection, through the merits of Christ.'

"The Lord be with you, and his rod and staff comfort you, as you pass through the dark valley that leads to the heavenly city, where that we may meet in peace prays your repentant son, who was lost and is found,"

"VALENTINE GAST."

"P.S.—Three days ago I did not expect to live until now, but it has pleased the Lord to give me a little strength, and I am setting out on my journey to you. It will be toilsome, perhaps fatal, but if I die on the road, some kind Christian will doubtless forward this letter to you. If I die before the hour fixed for my going, the worthy minister of Wertheim will send it. I hear the road is free from Imperialists."

## DR. LIVINGSTONE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATURAL HISTORY.

### PART II.

As we have commented, perhaps too largely, upon strange insects—such as the poison caterpillar, the tsetse, the tampan, etc.—we may perhaps be permitted to glance at such as are used for food. Of locusts we have already spoken. In Africa (as in Australia), caterpillars of various kinds are esteemed as delicacies. In the Kalahari Desert there is a large caterpillar, called "nato," which feeds on the leaves of the monáto, a species of acacia. It is nocturnal in its habits, coming down to bury itself during the day in the sand, at the root of the tree, in order to secure itself against the rays of the sun. The people dig for it, and roast it; they are fond of it, on account of its delicate vegetable flavour. When about to pass into a chrysalis state, it buries itself. Yet its goodness is still unimpaired, for even then it is eagerly sought for. This caterpillar is transformed into a beautiful butterfly.

The mopané tree—the iron-wood tree of the Portuguese—which during the day folds its leaves together in a perpendicular direction, is tenanted by two insects highly esteemed—the first, a species of psylla (an homopterous insect), the larvæ of which cover themselves with a sweet gummy secretion. These larvæ are collected in large quantities, and used as food. A similar larva in New Holland feeds on the eucalyptus, and is there in request. The second, called lopané, is a large caterpillar, three inches in length. Of this, numbers are regularly collected, strung together, and served up as a dainty dish.

But of all insect delicacies, the white ants, or termites—of whose enormous structures all travellers in the hotter regions have spoken—are in highest esteem. These ants, especially at the swarming season, are actively collected. They are then about half an inch long, as thick as a crowquill, and very fat. When roasted, they somewhat resemble grains of rice. An idea of the esteem in which this dish is held, may be formed from the expression of a native, when in conversation with Dr. Livingstone, on the banks of the Zouga: "The

Bayeyé chief," he says, "visiting us while eating, I gave him a piece of bread and preserved apricots, and, as he seemed to relish it much, I asked him if he had any food equal to that in his country. 'Ah!' said he, 'did you ever taste white ants?' As I never had, he replied, 'Well, if you had, you never could have desired to eat anything better.'" The general way of catching these insects is to dig into their mounds, and wait till the builders come forth to repair the damage. They are then brushed off into a vessel, much in the same manner as the ant-eater brushes them off with his long, slender, flexible tongue into his mouth.

There are many insects which Dr. Livingstone notices, on account of the singularity either of their form or their habits. Wild honey-bees, for example, abound everywhere, and honey is in request; but of the value of the wax, the Makololo tribes of the interior had no idea. Not so, however, the people of Angola, Benguela, and Loanda. Here bees are kept in artificial hives, made of the bark of a tree fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter. The hives are about five feet in length. Two circular incisions, at this distance apart, are made round the tree through the bark; these are connected by a longitudinal incision, and the bark is skilfully separated in one piece. When freed from the tree, its edges unite, so that it assumes its ordinary form. The slit is secured fast by sewing, or by slender wooden pegs, and the open ends of the cylinder are stopped by coils of grass rope, with a hole in the centre of one stopper, for the ingress and egress of the bees. These drum-like hives are placed, in a horizontal position, on high trees, with charms tied round the trunk. It was in the forests of Loanda, north of the Leeambye, that Dr. Livingstone first met with these artificial hives, the property of individuals; and all the wax, which forms so great an article of commerce at Loanda and other Portuguese settlements, is their produce. In these forests, the *churring* (honey-guide) abounds; but no one ventures to rifle an artificial hive at its call. The Makololo who accompanied Dr. Livingstone on his journey to Loanda, when they saw the commercial value of wax, lamented their ignorance of the fact, and no doubt have now repaired their error, as they, like all the tribes of the interior, are imbued with the spirit of trade.

In the Makololo territories, Dr. Livingstone met with numbers of dragon-fly-looking insects, the larvæ of which prey upon ants. These they capture in a peculiar manner. The larva in question is about an inch and a quarter long, as thick as a crow-quill, and covered with black hair. It puts its head into a little hole in the ground, and quivers its tail rapidly. The ants come near to examine the novel object, and, as they advance somewhat too closely, urged on by curiosity, are suddenly seized by the forceps or graspers, with which the vibratory tail is furnished. As the head of this larva is buried beneath the ground, it becomes a question as to the sense by which the tail is so accurately guided to the object. On first seeing this larva, Dr. Livingstone imagined that the forceps were on its head; but when the whole body was exposed to view, their real position was at once apparent.

In Europe, ants are so numerous and so remark-

able in their habits and manners, as to have excited the attention of the non-scientific, as well as of the scientific. In the warmer latitudes these insects force themselves upon our notice, often very unpleasantly or tormentingly, and loud are the complaints of travellers, and manifold are the stories which they relate respecting them. To one vicious, hard-biting species, which annoyed Dr. Livingstone not a little, we have already adverted. There are others, the curious habits of which he comments upon, and to which we may briefly advert. We shall pass over the mound-making termites or white ants, as we have described them in another article, and turn at once to other kinds.

In the large flat beyond Lake Dilolo, flooded during a great portion of the year, there is a species of black ant in great abundance, which during the dry season lives in chambers excavated in the earth; but before the rain sets in, as if foreseeing the inundation about to ensue, these ants ascend the tall stems of grass, above high-water mark, and there build little houses of black tenacious loam, some of which are about the size of a bean, and others considerably larger. In these uplifted habitations they dwell, descending when the plain becomes sufficiently dry for their labours on the earth. How strange is the overruling guidance of instinct! On the borders of the Kalahari desert, near the waters of Mashûé, there is a large black ant, nearly an inch in length, termed "leshónya," which when irritated emits a strong, pungent, and very disagreeable odour. The scent is as volatile as ether; for, on disturbing the insect with a stick, the odour is instantly perceptible.

Interesting are the accounts given of the black soldier ants, which go forth on marauding expeditions against the termites, which they seize, and render insensible or paralyzed by the poison of their sting, as caterpillars are by certain bees in Europe, which store them up as food for the larvæ, a mode of proceeding adopted by a hymenopterous insect (*Pelopæus eckloni*), noticed by Dr. Livingstone as similar in its habits to our mason bee, and called the "plasterer"; but want of space prevents our entering into details, and for the same reason we must pass over several spiders, the habits of which are very remarkable.† Some species wait for their prey in a bush, and catch it with a bound; some hunt like a dog, quartering the ground in all directions with great rapidity; some, as the "seláli," make purse-like nets of thickly felted silk, with a delicate white lining. These are buried in the ground, with a circular opening, fitted by a thick lid, like that of a snuff-box, moving on a hinge, which the spider opens and shuts at pleasure. Others make vast geometric webs, suspended from tree to tree, the lines of which are as thick as coarse thread; while others cover trees and bushes so completely, as to render trunk and branches invisible.

Reverting to the larger game, we may first notice the elephant. In the district around Colobeng, and along the borders of the Limpopo River, these majestic animals, the lords of the forest, are very numerous, and afford sport (if sport it can be

called) to the daring hunter, who not unfrequently (as in the case of Mr. Wallberg), meets with his death. In these districts the horse may be used, but around Lake Ngami the tsetse is an insuperable barrier to the introduction of that animal, and the pursuit must be carried forward on foot. The step of the elephant, when charging the hunter, though it does not appear rapid, is so long that the animal's pace equals that of a good horse at the canter. A man must have steady nerves to stand its charge, and embryo Nimrods would feel themselves much in the same position as if they were to place themselves on a railway, and allow the train to advance till within a few yards of them, with the intent of adroitly leaping to one side, and watching it pass by them. The shriek of the elephant, as he charges, resembles that of a steam-engine, and a horse unused to it will often stand shivering with fear, instead of taking his rider out of danger. One charge from an elephant has made many sportsmen, bold in the pheasant preserve, bid a final adieu to elephant-hunting.

It is a remarkable fact that the elephant diminishes in size as we advance northward. For example: at the Limpopo, the male elephant is upwards of twelve feet high; on the banks of Lake Ngami, where it exists in prodigious numbers, only eleven feet four; and farther north, only nine feet nine or ten inches. There is, however, an increase in the size of the tusks as we approach the equator. Dr. Livingstone remarks that the equatorial latitudes seem to be unfavourable for the full development of either animals or man; and he observed during his eastward journey that not only were the elephants smaller than in the south (abundant as was the food), but that koodoos and other antelopes were also reduced in stature, inasmuch that he and his men doubted at first whether they were not really distinct from those to which they had been accustomed in the south. The same observations apply to certain domestic animals, as the cattle, the goats, the dogs, and the fowls, except where crossed by imported breeds. It is a remarkable circumstance that the giraffe does not exist throughout the vast extent of country stretching north of the Zambesi; but to this we shall advert hereafter.

The African elephant is totally distinct from the Asiatic; the former, at its maximum of development, is much larger than the latter; but north of the Zambesi, the stature of both species is about equal. On one occasion, in this region, on the Kalomo (p. 545), Dr. Livingstone met with a tuskless female elephant—that is, one in which the tusks were undeveloped. In Ceylon, the elephants as a rule have the tusks either small, or altogether unprotruding. In the present instance, the animal being a female, we have no reason to conclude that such a variety (as one of permanence) exists in Central Africa.

The elephant is a delicate feeder, and is fond of the wild fruits of the country, which it will pick off, one by one, from the branches, those which abound in sugar, mucilage, and gum, being preferred. He may be seen putting his vast head to a lofty palmyra, and swaying it to and fro to shake off the seeds, which he picks up singly. On good feeding grounds, where fruit-trees abound, these animals become very fat, and the internal layers of

\* See Chap. xxvii. page 537.

† Chap. xvii. page 326.

lard are much prized by the natives, both as a delicacy, and an external unguent. With respect to the intelligence of the African elephant compared with its Asiatic relative, we may confidently state that in no respect can the latter claim superiority. It was from Africa that the Carthaginians obtained their elephants; and it was from the same country that Rome, at a later period, imported those which were trained to various feats—even rope-dancing—for the amusement of a degraded populace.\*

## INTRODUCTORY LESSONS ON THE MIND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LESSONS ON REASONING," AND ON "MORALS."

## LESSON XXVIII.

## SECT. 1.—EMULATION AND ENVY.

*Emulation*—the desire to surpass, or, at least to equal, those around us, in something that is accounted honourable—is a feeling which is not wrong in itself, but which needs to be most carefully watched, lest it degenerate into Envy. Emulation aims at advancing one's self; Envy seeks to lower another, and is accompanied with a feeling of dislike and hostility towards those who have outstripped or equalled us.

## JEALOUSY.

By *Jealousy* we generally understand what may be called *prospective Envy*: that is, a man is *jealous* of those who he *fears* will obtain a certain advantage, and *envious* of those who *have* attained it.

The approaches of the odious passion of Envy are the more insidious because of its very odiousness, since hardly any one will ever acknowledge to himself that he feels envy. Men endeavour to justify their aversion towards the object of their envy, on the ground of his being *unworthy* of the honour he has acquired. When any one obtains some kind of honour of which he is really undeserving, we are said to feel *indignant*; and hence men are apt to cloak their Envy under the guise of just indignation.

## WHO ARE THE OBJECTS OF THESE FEELINGS.

It is remarked by Aristotle, and also by Paley, that Emulation and Envy are felt chiefly towards those nearly on the same level with us; and that all desire of superiority, and all enjoyment in the obtaining of it, is in reference to those somewhat in our own position, and not very much above or very much below us. A shepherd feels no gratification from his superiority to the sheep, or the dog; nor the farmer from his superiority to his shepherd; nor the landlord from his superiority to the tenant-farmer; nor again the King from his superiority to the Landlord. But if the Shepherd is more knowing in the management of a flock than the neighbouring shepherds, or is a better cricket player or wrestler than the other rustics—if the Farmer has better crops and better cattle than his neighbours—if the Squire has more influence in the county than the other county-gentlemen—and if the King has a finer territory or more loyal subjects than his neighbours—this is the kind of superiority which men enjoy, and which they aim at.

And, again, the labourers are not so likely to envy the farmer, or the farmers the squire, or the squires the monarch, as these are to envy one another.

\* Male and female elephants, if adult, are never seen in one herd; they form separate herds, but the young males remain with their dams until they are full grown. Artists who draw pictures of herds of mixed males and females violate the truth of nature.

## SECT. 2.—BENEFIT TO SOCIETY.

It is well for society that this is so, considering how prone men are to the vice of Envy. For if the lower classes envied the higher as much as they are apt to envy one another, we should be involved in perpetual revolutions. It is only when the mass of the people are very much distressed, and have long been misgoverned, and grievously oppressed by their superiors (as in France under the old Monarchy), that the full tide of popular envy is turned against those possessed of rank and wealth. And the consequences then are dreadful.

As for Emulation, *that*, from its very nature, can only be felt towards those but a few steps above us; for it is those only that we can hope to overtake or to surpass. A village schoolmaster, or a farmer, cannot feel any towards a Minister of State, or Sovereign Prince; but the sight of a school, or a farm, better managed than their own, may fire them with Emulation.

## GENEROUS EMULATION.

Emulation is very apt (as has been said) to degenerate, in base minds, into Envy. But with those of a contrary character, and when directed towards noble objects, it may prove a powerful aid in a virtuous and honourable course. One may see two or three nobleminded youths united in the bonds of friendship, though they may have been competing with each other for school prizes, and perhaps are now running a like race at College, and in after life will very likely be emulating one another in the career of some liberal Profession; and all without the least tincture of ill-will or interruption of friendship.

## SECT. 3.—DESIRE OF POWER.

The desire of power seems to be a part of the human constitution, though in very different degrees in different persons. One form of it is commonly called *Ambition*. Some philosophers speak of a tendency to *destruction*; but it is probable that what they describe as destructiveness is merely one form, and a very common one, of the desire to *produce an effect*—in short, to exercise power. One may see a little baby delighting to exercise its infant strength on anything that is within reach. It prefers to handle those objects which it can *alter the shape of*—to roll a ball, to throw down a chair, or to break its toys. The reason why the pleasure of exercising power shows itself, in children and in the ignorant and coarse-minded—principally in *destroying* or in doing *mischief* of some kind—is partly (1), because this is much *the easiest* and most obvious exertion of power, and partly (2) because it the most impresses the mind with a full *consciousness* of power.

(1). It is far easier to inflict a wound than to heal one; to set fire to a hay-rick, than to extinguish it; to break any article, than to make it; and universally to do hurt, than to do good; but, moreover (2), when you do any hurt to any one, you feel that it is *wholly your own exertion* of power, and that he does not co-operate, but, if possible, would oppose you, and that you *prevail* over him. But when you do him any service, he, if possible, aids your efforts. If, for instance, you throw a man down, this is in spite of his resistance, or at least without aid from him; but if you *raise up* one that is down, he joins his efforts with yours. Hence it is that the most base-minded and brutish display their love of power chiefly in the way of mischief, tyranny, and cruelty. And a further confirmation of this is, that the most savage tyrants often delight to load with honours and favours some one whom they have taken a fancy to; and that this favourite is usually some worthless person, whom they have raised from the dregs of the people. The elevation of such a person the tyrant feels is completely his own

doing, and an exercise of his supreme power. A man of merit and ability, on the contrary, would have been considered as having himself contributed to his own elevation.

#### SECT. 4.—DANGERS OF LOVE OF POWER.

It is almost superfluous even to mention the vast amount of evil—the oppression, the wanton cruelty, and injustice of every kind—that spring from an inordinate or misdirected and uncontrolled love of Power. Though not an evil in itself, when carefully kept within bounds, and regulated by sound judgment and virtuous principle, there is no propensity of our nature that needs to be more anxiously watched and steadily repressed.

#### CRAVING FOR EXCITEMENT.

It must not, however, be inferred from what has been said, that all persons are *cruel* who are strongly attracted by narratives, or even spectacles, of suffering. Even of the coarse-minded vulgar who crowd to see an execution, there are probably many who would be glad to rescue the sufferer if they could. But there is in the human mind a certain craving for excitement, for the sake of which men are willing to endure an admixture of pain; for pain is far more stimulating than pure, unmixed pleasure, and thence a certain degree of it is encountered for the sake of that excitement. Representations of sufferings which even call forth tears, and give a certain amount of pain to the spectator or reader, yet prove attractive from the stimulus they thus afford. The craving for a stimulus of this kind may be compared to the appetite for such condiments as mustard, salt, pepper, or vinegar in our food. An excess of these would be very disagreeable; but a moderate admixture corrects the insipidity or over-lusciousness of unmixed sweets.

#### NERVOUS SENSITIVENESS.

On the other hand, some persons have something in their bodily constitution which gives them an excessive horror at inflicting or witnessing death or wounds, and some even faint at the description of them; yet these are not necessarily kind-hearted, or even exempt from cruelty. A person who shudders at the sight of bloodshed, and could hardly bring himself even to kill a wasp that was teasing him, may, conceivably, be harsh and tyrannical, hard-hearted, or bitterly resentful.

#### SECT. 5.—DESIRE OF GAIN.

The desire, again, of *acquiring* and of *possessing* some kind of property, seems to be a part of the human constitution, though in very various degrees in different persons; for though the mere calculation of Self-love would lead men to provide for their subsistence, and for the various gratifications which wealth can purchase, there seems to be, over and above this, a wish in most men, and probably more or less in all men, to possess something that they can call their *own*; and the degree in which this exists in each man is not found to be in exact proportion to the degree in which each desires or enjoys those things which are to be procured by wealth. On the contrary, one may see it particularly strong in persons who, for the mere pleasure of gaining and keeping wealth, are content to forego, all their lives, most of the luxuries and even comforts of life.

It is not improbable, however, that in many instances the love of *power*, above noticed, is much mixed up with the love of gain, and takes that form; for wealth confers a kind of power.

#### AVARICE.

The excess of this tendency is called *Avarice* or *Covetousness*, and sometimes love of money. This last expression leads some into the error of supposing

that those rude nations which have not learned the use of money, must be exempt from any such passion; whereas, in fact, they are often excessively covetous of such things as to them are wealth, and not seldom, thievish.

It is almost superfluous to observe that *Avarice* is a vice, and one which it is needful to guard against with the utmost care, more especially because, to the greater part of mankind, the pursuit of gain—the earning of money—is a matter of necessity and of duty, that they may be able to support themselves and their families. The more care, therefore, is to be taken lest the vice of *Avarice* should creep in and gain possession of the heart, under the disguise of what is allowable and right. And though the danger of an over-devotedness to the pursuit of gain is one which all men should carefully guard against, it is evident that this danger is the *greatest*—though some people speak as if it were just the reverse—to those who are *not* rich, but are *obliged* to labour, and to be very careful, in order to secure a decent subsistence. The wealthy *may* think a great deal about money; the poor *must*.

*Avarice* assumes various forms, according to the other dispositions with which it is combined. One who is over-cautious, timid, and not hopeful, will be what is called *stingy* or *penurious*—not so eager for gain, as fearful of loss, and perhaps thence incurring loss by letting, for instance, his house and his farm go to ruin, from grudging the cost of timely repair and of proper tillage and manure. Another man, of a daring and sanguine temper, will perhaps not grudge expenditure, but will be *covetous* and grasping; and such a one will often, through greediness of gain, ruin himself by rash speculations.

#### EFFICACY OF EXAMPLE.

Is it wayward harshness or sullenness of temper that is the prominent defect in one who is dear to you? Who knows not that words of reproof, however gently administered, would often but add fuel to the fire of such a spirit? But there is another and more excellent way of admonition, which will seldom, if ever, fail. Rebuke by love, remonstrate by gentleness, preach self-restraint by living it. Exhibit the softening power of Christ's grace—not by talking about it, but by acting in habitual subjection to it; by your sweet, gentle, Christ-like temper and bearing, by your return of kindness for harshness, by your calm forbearance and unruffled serenity amidst sore provocations and wrongs: and oftentimes you will find that the spirit whose false pride direct remonstrance would only serve to rouse, will own unconsciously the all-subduing power of love.—*Caird*.

**TIME**, the most precious of all possessions, is commonly the least prized. It is, like health, regretted when gone, but rarely improved when present. We know it is irrecoverable, yet throw it wantonly away. We know it is fleet, yet fail to catch the current moment. It is the space of life; and while we never properly occupy its limits, we nevertheless murmur at their narrowness. It is the field of exertion, and while we continually leave it fallow, we yet sorrow over our stinted harvest.

**THE** weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers on a single object, can accomplish something: the strongest, by dispersing his powers over many, may fail to accomplish anything. The drop, by continued falling, bores its passage through the hardest rock; the hasty torrent rushes over it with hideous uproar, and leaves a less trace behind.

**MECKNESS**.—A boy was asked what meekness was. He thought a moment, and said, "Meekness gives smooth answers to rough questions."